

Preston Rural District Council.

Report of the Medical Officer of Health for the Year ended 31st December, 1940.



To the Chairman and Members of the Preston Rural District Council.

GENTLEMEN,

The Ministry of Health, in Circular 2314 (England) dated 26th March, 1941, request that the Annual Reports of Medical Officers of Health be prepared on similar lines to last year, viz., an Interim Report, together with the careful preservation of all Records, including the Statistics to be supplied by the Registrar-General, in order that after the termination of the war a report could be made dealing more fully with the period from the beginning of 1939 to the end of the last complete year, giving separate statistics for each year in order that the annual records may, as far as practicable, be continuous and complete. These Records have been fully prepared and are now in the custody of the Clerk to the Rural District Council.

Vital Statistics.—During the year 1940, there were 544 live births, 20 stillbirths, 425 deaths, and 33 infant deaths. Cancer caused 45 deaths, pulmonary tuberculosis 13 deaths, and non-pulmonary 8 deaths.

The live birth-rate was 14·3 per 1,000 of the population, death-rate 11·2, and infant mortality 60 per 1,000 births. The estimated population of the Rural Area is 37,890.

I have prepared the statistical tables usually given in my printed Report, and these are appended hereto.

Matters arising from or connected with the war.

Government Evacuation Scheme.—From a Return prepared on the 1st January, 1941, the number of evacuees then billeted in the Rural District was—unaccompanied children 212, adults 80, and accompanied children 59.

Civil Nursing Reserve.—The District was placarded inviting volunteers for this Service.

Air Raid Precautions.—Ten First Aid Depôts have been provided in the Rural District, together with two Mobile Units, with the necessary equipment and personnel.

Emergency Medical Service.—A hospital for 900 beds is available for war casualties and civilians.

I have done all in my power as Medical Officer of Health to co-operate with the Military and other Services.

Infectious Diseases.

The year 1940 did not produce any marked features in the Rural District as regards the prevalence of infectious diseases apart from the almost continuous presence of measles, which gave rise to 352 notifications. Scarlet fever with 48 cases and diphtheria 13 cases compared favourably with the preceding year with 76 and 31 cases respectively. Of the 8 enteric fever cases 7 were notified from the Mental Hospital, Whittingham. Pulmonary tuberculosis contributed 20 cases and non-pulmonary 16 cases. All the notifications are analysed in age-groups and the distribution in the several Townships is shown in the Tables appended.

Diphtheria Immunisation.—The scheme of immunisation was carried out all over the Rural area, operating through the schools; in addition to school children, every effort was made to embody children from one year of age to school age. This scheme will be pressed on with and extended.

Seventy-five houses were disinfected.

Measures for Maternity and Child Welfare, &c.

This service continued to hold a prominent place in the public health administration of the Rural District, and it can with confidence be stated that many mothers and children have benefited greatly by the guidance and practical assistance this service has provided. The various Clinics established by the County Council were maintained. The attendances are given in a Table (appended) kindly supplied by the County Medical Officer of Health.

There are 8 midwives resident and practising in the District, 2 salaried midwives employed by the County Council, 5 employed by the District Nursing Association, and one midwife in private practice.

Fourteen nurses provided by the Lancashire County Nursing Association serve the Rural area ; the cases attended during the year ended March, 1941, were—midwifery 75, maternity 64, T.B. 2, general 934. The total visits paid were 22,031. A Table showing the cases nursed in the various Townships is given in the Appendix.

Milk for School Children.—Under the County scheme 11,236 pints of milk were supplied to school children during the year.

Pathological Examinations.—311 specimens were examined for the Rural Council at the Preston Royal Infirmary Department of Pathology. Details are appended.

Sanitary Circumstances of the Area.

The extent and progress of the sanitary surveys carried out during the year, and details showing the amount of work accomplished, are given fully in the Appendices to this Report ; only brief references to the principal items are here given.

New Houses.—Owing to war conditions there was a marked reduction in the number of new houses erected in the Rural District, only 80 being built as compared with 405 in the year 1939.

Water Supplies.—The Engineer's Report shows that 71 new houses were supplied with water during the year. Details of the extensions of mains are set out in his Report which is included in the Appendix. Bacteriological examinations were made of the Preston, Manchester and Fylde waters as supplied to the Rural area, and these all showed satisfactory results ; the detailed results of the examinations are recorded in the Appendix.

Sewerage.—There are five disposal works in the Rural area, and everything is done to maintain them in a satisfactory manner. A Scheme for sewerage and sewage disposal for Grimsargh was prepared and submitted to the Ministry of Health, but was deferred until the termination of hostilities.

Scavenging.—Seventeen of the Rural Parishes are scavenged by the Authority. A summary of the work carried out is given in the Report of Mr. Collier, Chief Sanitary Inspector and Engineer.

Protection of the Food Supplies.—There has been no relaxation in the measures usually taken to protect the food supply of the rural population. There are 649 dairy farms in the district with approximately 12,250 cows. One hundred and eighteen samples of milk were submitted to biological tests, and 139 sediments tests were made. Sixty samples of food stuffs were submitted for analysis under the Food (Adulteration) Acts, for the period August 28th to the end of the year ; owing to the removal of records it is not possible, at the present time, to give the complete figures for the whole year. Bakehouses and other premises where food is prepared, and slaughter-houses, were kept under constant observation. Nearly one ton of meat was condemned as unfit for human food. Full details of this section of the public health administration are given in the Chief Sanitary Inspector's Report attached hereto.

Town Planning.—The activities of this Department have been seriously curtailed due to war conditions. Fifty-four applications to develop were considered during the year.

Parks and Playing Fields.—The capital works on the Parks and Playing Fields has been discontinued until the cessation of hostilities, and maintenance has been reduced to a minimum.

Salvage.—In March, 1940, a scheme for the collection of salvage was commenced ; over 292 tons of various materials were "salvaged," valued at £966.

I trust this abbreviated Report will be acceptable to the Council, and I desire to express to them my grateful thanks for their continued confidence and courtesy, and I also desire to thank the Officers of the Council for much assistance rendered to me in carrying out my obligations as your Medical Officer of Health.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

CHARLES J. TRIMBLE,

August, 1941.

Medical Officer of Health.

